

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1953

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 13114

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE: RESOLUTION IN SIGHT?

REF: TOKYO 12977

SUMMARY. PRIMIN MIKI AND LDP LEADERSHIP PRESENTED PRO-
POSAL TO SETTLE ONGOING LDP LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE AUGUST 30.

THREE ELEMENTS ARE: (A) SHUFFLE OF LDP LEADERSHIP AND
CABINET BEFORE NEW DIET SESSION; (B) SESSION ITSELF WOULD
BE CONVENED PROMPTLY TO PASS IMPORTANT LEGISLATION; AND
(C) AFTER DIET SESSION, LDP GENERAL ELECTION POSTURE WOULD
BE DECIDED. MIKI OPPONENTS, FUKUDA AND OHIRA, EXPRESSED
"UNDERSTANDING," BUT NOT ACCEPTANCE AFTER LENGTHY
DISCUSSION OF PROPOSAL WITH MIKI. PROPOSAL HAS RUN
INTO STRONG OPPOSITION FROM ANTI-MIKI FORCES WITHIN
LDP AND ACCEPTANCE REMAINS UNCERTAIN, BUT WE INCLINE
TO VIEW THAT ACCEPTANCE LIKELY SOMETIME SOON. WITH
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ACCEPTANCE, CABINET/PARTY LEADERSHIP SHUFFLE WOULD COME

QUICKLY -- POSSIBLY EVEN THIS WEEK -- AND DIET MIGHT BE CONVENED AS EARLY AS NEXT WEEK. BUT WHEN MIKI WILL STEP DOWN -- BEFORE OR AFTER REQUIRED LATE YEAR ELECTIONS -- REMAINS INTENTIONALLY VAGUE AND SO, CONSEQUENTLY, IS TIMING OF ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE, WHICH HAS SHARPLY DIVIDED LDP, MAY BE HEADING FOR RESOLUTION. BASIS IS THREE POINT COMPROMISE PROPOSAL CONCEIVED BY PRIMIN MIKI AND REFINED BY FORMAL PARTY LEADERSHIP. COMPROMISE PACKAGE WAS TOPIC OF LENGTHY AUGUST 30 MIKI-FUKUDA-OHIRA CONVERSATION. FUKUDA AND OHIRA, WHILE PROFESSING "COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING" OF COMPROMISE ELEMENTS, POINTEDLY REFUSED TO ACCEPT THEM.

2. AS FORMULATED BY LDP LEADERSHIP, COMPROMISE PACKAGE IS WELL PHRASED, WITH ESSENTIAL VAGUENESS REMAINING. THREE ELEMENTS ARE:

--BEFORE CONVENING EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION, LDP LEADERSHIP AND CABINET WILL BE SHUFFLED.

--EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION WILL BE OPENED PROMPTLY TO PASS IMPORTANT (BUDGET-RELATED) LEGISLATION.

--AFTER EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION, LDP GENERAL ELECTION POSTURE WILL BE DECIDED AND MADE CLEAR BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PARTY.

3. INITIAL REACTION HAS BEEN ONE OF UNCERTAINTY AS BOTH PRO- AND ANTI-MIKI FORCES WEIGH ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF INTENTIONALLY VAGUE COMPROMISE ELEMENTS. OPPOSITION TO COMPROMISE FROM ADAMANTLY ANTI-MIKI FORCES CONTINUES TO BE VOICED ALTHOUGH, SIGNIFICANTLY, LDP ELDER HORI APPEARS TO HAVE CAREFULLY LEFT DOOR OPEN TO ACCEPTANCE. PREVAILING VIEW HERE IS, HOWEVER, THAT COMPROMISE IS LIKELY TO BE ACCEPTED IF ONLY BECAUSE PARTY LEADERSHIP HAS THREATENED TO RESIGN IF IT IS NOT ACCEPTED AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE ON HORIZON WHO COULD OBVIOUSLY PLAY INTERMEDIARY ROLE. THUS EXPECTATION IS THAT THIS OR VERY SIMILAR PROPOSAL WILL SOON BE SEEN AS "INEVITABLE."

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4. MUCH ATTENTION HAS ALREADY SHIFTED TO COMPOSITION OF POSSIBLE NEW PARTY LEADERSHIP AND CABINET. PRIMIN MIKI HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT MOST PARTY LEADERS AND CABINET MEMBERS WILL BE SHIFTED. IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT LDP SEC GEN NAKASONE WILL STEP DOWN. HE IS THOUGHT TO BE VULNERABLE ON LOCKHEED GROUNDS AND IS WIDELY DIS-TRUSTED WITHIN THE LDP AND BY HIS OPPOSITION PARTY COUNTER-

PARTS. NAKASONE MIGHT WELL BE REPLACED BY SOMEONE FROM THE ANTI-MIKI CAMP, HELPING TO RESTORE PARTY UNITY WHILE REMOVING THIS LEVER FROM MIKI'S GRASP. SPECULATION IS RIFE AND CONTRADICTORY AS TO WHO MIGHT SERVE IN A NEW CABINET. BUT PLAUSIBLE REASONS CAN BE ADDUCED FOR RETAINING FINMIN OHIRA, FONMIN MIYAZAWA, MITI MIN KOMOTO, CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY IDE, EDMIN NAGAI, JUSMIN INABA, AND JDA CHIEF SAKATA. THE CABINET SHUFFLE COULD CONCEIVABLY BE COMPLETED BY SEPTEMBER 2 AT VERY EARLIEST.

5. PRESSURE IS BUILDING FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION, PARTICULARLY IN BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND BOTH PRO- AND ANTI-MIKI FORCES BELIEVE IT DESIRABLE. IT WOULD LIKELY TAKE UP BUDGET-RELATED FINANCE BILLS AND VERY LITTLE ELSE. AT EARLIEST, CABINET SEPTEMBER 3 MIGHT DECIDE TO CONVENE THE DIET SOMETIME BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 7 AND 10 FOR DURATION OF THREE OR FOUR WEEKS OR SO.

6. CRUCIAL THIRD POINT -- WHEN MIKI WILL STEP DOWN -- IS LEFT INTENTIONALLY VAGUE. JAPANESE PHRASING IS COMPLETELY NEUTRAL IN NUANCE. THUS IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT INTERPRETATIONS ARE DIVIDED AS TO WHETHER MIKI WILL STEP DOWN BEFORE OR AFTER GENERAL ELECTION. AN EQUALLY PERSUASIVE CASE CAN BE MADE FOR EITHER INTERPRETATION, AND THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THE GREAT RELUCTANCE OF ANTI-MIKI FORCES TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL. AT SAME TIME, FIRM STEP DOWN DATE WOULD IMMEDIATELY MAKE MIKI LAME DUCK.

7. IF MIKI REMAINS THROUGH A GENERAL ELECTION, IT MIGHT WELL COME IN LATE OCTOBER OR EARLY NOVEMBER. ON OTHER HAND, IF MIKI WERE REPLACED BY FUKUDA BEFORE ELECTION, A LATER ELECTION DATE -- EARLY/MID-DECEMBER OR, CONCEIVABLY, EARLY JANUARY -- IS MORE LIKELY.
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8. AT THIS WRITING, COMPROMISE PROPOSAL ITSELF HAS RUN INTO UNEXPECTEDLY STRONG OPPOSITION WITHIN ANTI-MIKI FORCES. THUS POSSIBILITY THAT AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE REACHED CANNOT BE RULED OUT. IF SO, MIKI MAY FEEL COMPELLED TO DISSOLVE LOWER HOUSE WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS. BUT, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, WE BELIEVE COMPROMISE PACKAGE WILL SOONER OR LATER BE ACCEPTED, IF GRUDGINGLY. CONTINUED DEBATE OVER ACCEPTANCE, HOWEVER, INCREASES CHANCES THAT DATES FOR CABINET SHUFFLE, CONVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION, ETC. WILL BE DELAYED.
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